



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

## STATISTICS OF THE DEAF AND DUMB IN GERMANY.

The Imperial Board of Health has recently published in separate form the statistics of the deaf and dumb resulting from the census of 1900 ("Sonderabdruck aus Medizinal-Statistische Mittheilungen"). As previous enumerations did not cover all the states, we are now for the first time in possession of complete and detailed information in regard to the distribution of the deaf and dumb throughout the entire empire.

The whole number of deaf and dumb enumerated was 48,750, distributed as follows:—

Prussia . . . . .	31,448	or 64.5	per cent.
Bavaria . . . . .	5,494	" 11.3	"
Saxony . . . . .	2,396	" 4.9	"
Württemberg . . . . .	2,213	" 4.5	"
Baden . . . . .	2,147	" 4.4	"
Alsace-Lorraine . . . . .	1,336	" 2.7	"
Hessen . . . . .	904	" 1.9	"

In each of the other states less than 500 were found, and in nine states less than 100.

The proportion of deaf and dumb to each 10,000 of population was:—

Baden . . . . .	11.5
Württemberg . . . . .	10.2
Sachsen-Meiningen . . . . .	9.3
Prussia . . . . .	9.1
Bavaria . . . . .	8.9

In the other states, as well as in Alsace-Lorraine, the proportion was less than the average for the empire, which is placed at 8.6. A more accurate picture of the geographical distribution of the deaf and dumb is obtained by a tabulation according to place of birth, as place of residence at the time of the enumeration may in some cases have been a matter of accident.

Arranged according to place of birth, the proportion of deaf and dumb to each 10,000 of population shows the following variations:—

Baden . . . . .	11.5
Sachsen-Meiningen . . . . .	9.9
Württemberg . . . . .	9.5
Waldeck . . . . .	9.3
Schwarzburg-Rudolstadt . . . . .	9.2
Prussia . . . . .	9.0
Bavaria . . . . .	8.8

All the other states had a smaller proportion of deaf and dumb than the average for the empire. This is especially true of Saxony, Sachsen-Altenburg, Anhalt, Oldenburg, and the free cities.

The deaf and dumb were most numerous in the far eastern provinces of Prussia, which belong to the lowlands of North Germany. "This fact is in contradiction to the views of various experts, which in earlier times were commonly accepted,—namely, that deaf-muteism is more prevalent in mountain districts, particularly in the Alpine region, than in the lowlands.

"It cannot be accepted as conclusively proved that altitude or conditions relating in any way to the soil—for instance, the drinking water—have any perceptible influence upon the origin and spread of the defect under consideration. On the other hand, it seems more reasonable to attribute the numerical strength of the deaf and dumb in the north-east and in some mountainous districts to unfavorable social conditions, to which perhaps belongs the relative lack of medical assistance."

Since the census of 1871 there has been a perceptible diminution in the number of deaf and dumb. Among the 22 states for which a comparison can be made with earlier enumerations, only 4 show an increase; while in the remaining 18 the proportion of deaf and dumb is smaller than before.

Another interesting conclusion which the tables place beyond dispute is that the thickly populated communities have relatively a smaller proportion of deaf and dumb than the sparsely inhabited parts, although exceptions are not lacking. "In general, it seems to be the rule that the numerical strength of the deaf and dumb is in inverse ratio to the density of population." Again, the less favorable environment, and particularly the unhygienic conditions under which the scattered population of the lowlands live, as compared with that of the cities and the richer rural districts, seem to offer the only explanation of this phenomenon.

Of the whole number of deaf and dumb, 54.1 per cent. were males and 45.9 per cent. females, or to each 10,000 of population 9.5 males and 7.8 females. So far no satisfactory explanation has been found of this preponderance of male deaf and dumb. It is by no means a new discovery, but is the more noteworthy because of the decided preponderance of females in the total population. What is true of the empire in this respect is true of nearly all the states, with unimportant exceptions.

In respect to age it is remarked that the smallest representation is found in the group "under five years of age," which, in view of

the established fact that the defect under consideration, if not congenital, occurs in most cases before the child has reached the age of two, can only be explained by assuming that many children are not clearly recognized as being deaf and dumb until they are sent to school.

Special efforts were made in the schedules to distinguish between persons who have been deaf and dumb since earliest childhood and those who have become such later in life. For the whole empire it is found that in each 100 cases 82.7 belong in the former group and 17.3 in the latter.

The statistics at hand do not permit an exact statement in regard to the number of congenital cases as distinguished from those who have become deaf-mutes at a later period in life. It is estimated, however, that the former constitute 75.8 per cent. and the latter 24.2 per cent. of all cases. At any rate, it seems clearly established, much expert opinion to the contrary notwithstanding, that in the great majority of instances deaf-muteism is a congenital defect.

The Jews contribute relatively larger quota to the deaf and dumb class of population than the adherents of other confessions. Among the evangelical Christians there were 8.3 deaf-mutes in each 10,000 of population, among the Catholics 9.2, but among the Jews 13.6.

The preponderance of deaf-muteism in the Jewish population has been noticed in other enumerations, and has been thought largely due to marriage between blood relations. The correctness of this view is supported by the fact that congenital deaf-muteism is relatively more frequent among the Jews than among people of the Christian confessions. According to the census of 1900 the proportion of deaf-mutes who had been such from birth or since earliest childhood was, among evangelical Christians, 77.5 in each 100; among Catholic Christians, 77.0 in each 100; and among Jews, 79.2 in each 100.

About 90 per cent. of the families entering into the enumeration had but one deaf and dumb member, 7.7 per cent. had two such members, 1.4 per cent. three, etc. It is remarked that the districts containing an unusual percentage of families having more than one deaf-mute also had a proportionately large number of deaf-mutes who are or have been married. There lies in this fact a hint of the possibility that deaf-muteism may often be an inherited defect. Yet comparatively few of the deaf and dumb contract marriage. No less than 85.7 per cent. of the persons enumerated (exclusive of children under fifteen years) were returned as single. At the same time it is found that in some states marriages of deaf-mutes occur with greater frequency than formerly.

Perhaps the most important facts which appear to be established by the German census are: 1. That during the last decade there has been a perceptible decrease in the number of the deaf and dumb; 2. That the principal etiological factor in deaf-muteism, aside from hereditary tendencies, must be sought in unfavorable material conditions and an unhygienic mode of life. If the latter be true, it follows that deaf-muteism is a defect which, if it cannot be wholly eradicated, belongs, nevertheless, to the afflictions which in a measure can be prevented.

Aside from its value as a contribution to the knowledge of conditions which affect a considerable proportion of the population, this German study may well serve as a model for investigators in other countries. Among other things, it illustrates the unreasonableness of entering upon an enumeration of the deaf and dumb under restrictions like those governing our own Bureau of the Census, which expressly forbid making further inquiries than relate to name, sex, age, and post-office address. If it had been undertaken under similar restrictions, the work of the German authorities would hardly have been worthy of a review.

JOHN KOREN.

---

### RECENT SANITARY REPORTS.

The world moves, and year by year there are more municipal reports which show evidence of sound sanitary practice and good book-keeping in the shape of vital statistics.

The *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Health of Milwaukee* for the year ending April 14, 1904, is an example of one well above the average.

The general death-rate shows a decrease from about 20 in the early seventies to under 14 since 1897. The population from year to year appears to have been calculated on a curious basis, showing wide fluctuations from year to year. The rate of increase from 1897 to 1902 is estimated at 5,000 persons per year. In 1903, however, the registrar has assumed a leap from 300,000 to 315,000, which helps to mask an increase of 200 deaths. The ratio of deaths under five to total deaths shows a significant fall from 49 and 51 in 1892-94 to 34 and 35 in 1901-03. According to Dr. Schulz, the health commissioner, the marked improvement shown is due to a special campaign conducted for the improvement of the milk supply. Diphtheria statistics show a fatality rate of over 30 per cent for 1892-95, and